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#### **Heart Attack Survival Action Plan**

Having a personal action plan in case of a heart attack is one way you can improve your odds of quick treatment.

### The list below can guide your action plan.

- If you have symptoms of a heart attack that come on suddenly and last for more than a few minutes (even if they come and go), and you feel terrible and different than you ever have before when experiencing indigestion, anxiety, or stress, get help immediately. Call 911.
- Do not drive yourself to the hospital.
  Leave the driving to emergency
  personnel. You must be transported and
  receive treatment as quickly as
  possible, perhaps even en route to the
  hospital. The paramedics in the
  ambulance can perform an
  electrocardiogram (ECG or EKG) in the
  ambulance to confirm if you are having
  a heart attack. If you are, the
  paramedics will notify the interventional
  cardiologist that you are coming and
  have the catheterization lab ready for
  an interventional procedure, such as
  balloon angioplasty and stenting.
- When you talk to the 911 operator, the paramedics, and any other health care professional, say "I think I'm having a heart attack."
- While you are waiting for the ambulance to arrive, chew one uncoated aspirin to reduce blood clot formation that can cause a heart attack.
- Don't let anyone talk you out of what you believe your body is telling you.
   Request a thorough cardiac examination if you think you might be having a heart attack.
- If you are not referred to a cardiologist, ask, "Have you checked to make sure I'm not having a heart attack?"
- You can also ask for an electrocardiogram (ECG, or EKG) or a blood test such as troponin, which measure levels of injury to the heart muscle.

#### THE WARNING SIGNS

Many heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes or that goes away and comes back. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness, or stabbing pain.

However, not all heart attacks are preceded by chest pain.

# Heart attack symptoms include the following:

- Chest discomfort
- Discomfort in other areas of the upper body: one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach
- Shortness of breath with or without chest discomfort
- Pounding heart, change in heart rhythm
- Heartburn, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain
- · Breaking out in a cold sweat
- Nausea
- · Dizziness or lightheadedness

## These warning signs are particularly common in women:

- Sudden onset of weakness, shortness of breath, nausea/vomiting, indigestion, fatigue, body aches, or overall
- feeling of illness (without chest pain)
- Unusual feeling or mild discomfort in the back, chest, arm, neck, or jaw (without chest pain)
- Sleep disturbance
- Anxiety

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